

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to sponsor this bill today before us, H.R. 5395, a bill to name a Missouri post office after a true champion of civil rights, Congressman William ``Bill" Clay. Mr. Clay retired from the House of Representatives in the year 2000 after a stellar career in public service.

It's especially appropriate to have this tribute for him to name the Florissant, Missouri, post office in his honor that is located in Missouri's First Congressional District that he represented for 32 years in Congress, where he rose to become chairman of the House Committee on the Post Office and Civil Service and achieved the third highest rank in seniority in the entire U.S. House.

Mr. Clay was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and began his political career in 1959 as a member of the St. Louis Board of Aldermen, where he served until 1964. Prior to entering Congress in 1968, he also worked as a real estate broker and later as a labor coordinator. He worked for the union of St. Louis City employees from 1961 to 1964 and then with the Steamfitters Union until 1967.

Congressman Bill Clay is known as a true pioneer of civil rights. Throughout his tenure in Congress, he became a champion of social justice and labor rights, working on behalf of the poor and the disenfranchised. Bill Clay was co-founder of the Congressional Black Caucus. He was an author of the history of African Americans who served in Congress. And he had a famous saying, that he did not have permanent friends or permanent enemies in politics, just permanent interest. He looked out for the people that he represented, and he served them well. He's been credited with turning back racial discrimination throughout his career. He remains today an outspoken leader in our community, an accomplished author. This will be a fitting tribute to his years of dedication in public service.

I ask that the U.S. House of Representatives respect this living legend, this inspirational leader, Congressman William ``Bill" Clay with this fitting tribute of naming a Missouri post office in his honor.